

Curbs Eased On Travel to Red Nations

Medical Specialists Win Permission of State Department

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State Department restrictions on travel to Red China and other Communist countries were relaxed yesterday for medical specialists as a result of Dr. Paul Dudley White's meeting in Moscow last summer with a group of American-trained Chinese Communist doctors.

The easing of travel restrictions is a significant departure in American policy. It means that, for medical specialists at least, there is now blanket approval for those who wish to travel and can get into Red China, Cuba, North Vietnam, Albania and North Korea.

Previously, there was no blanket approval for doctors and public health experts to travel to these countries. Rather, passport validation for such travel was handled charily on a case-by-case basis.

Though individual validation will still be required, the State Department has told the medical profession, in effect, that it will not stand in the way of doctors and public health experts who want to travel to these countries.

The new rule applies only to medical experts. But it is expected that other scientists such as physicists, chemists, and biologists will now approach the Department for

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similar blanket approval for travel to Red China and the other Communist countries.

The reason medical specialists were picked to break the ice on travel to Red China, according to informed sources, is that medicine's benefits are universal, medicine is apolitical, and "it is a good place to start," as one Administration official put it.

Validation of American passports does not ensure that medical specialists will gain entry into Red China or the other Communist countries. Last December Dr. Samuel Rosen, a New York ear surgeon, tried to enter Red China at the invitation of the Red Chinese. But at the last minute he was refused a visa.

Similarly, the passports of 80 American newsmen have been validated for travel to Red China, but Red China has not permitted the newsmen to enter.

Calls for Cooperation

The decision to grant medical specialists blanket approval for travel to Red China has been pending for weeks. Indeed, there have been two trial balloons in recent months to see what, if any, opposition developed to the policy change.

The first balloon was floated

by Secretary of State Dean Rusk on Nov. 4 at a White House Conference on Medicine and Health. The second

was loosed at the end of November by presidential science adviser Donald F. Hornig who told the International Cooperation Year Conference here that cooperation in health sciences with Communist China "would be mutually beneficial."

The role of the distinguished American heart specialist Paul Dudley White proved critical. What happened, apparently, was this:

Dr. White was in Moscow last summer. There he met a group of Communist Chinese doctors, many trained in the United States. The conversation between Dr. White and the Chinese was cordial.

Upon his return to America, Dr. White wrote the Chinese doctors. They wrote back saying, in effect, it would be nice to see Dr. White but that State Department restrictions made it impossible. There was no formal invitation to Dr. White.

Writes to Rusk

Thereupon, Dr. White wrote to Rusk asking, as the State Department put it, "that unrestricted passports be issued for individuals devoted to the care of the health of all the peoples of the world."

Yesterday, the State Department formally agreed with Dr. White and announced its new policy.

A State Department spokesman said last night that Dr. White, who could not be reached in Boston, has not yet applied for validation of his passport for travel to Red China. However, a few other doctors have, and their validation applications are pending.

So far as is known, no American scientist has been invited to attend a scientific meeting in Red China. Nor, on the other hand, has any Red Chinese scientist sought to attend an international scientific meeting here.